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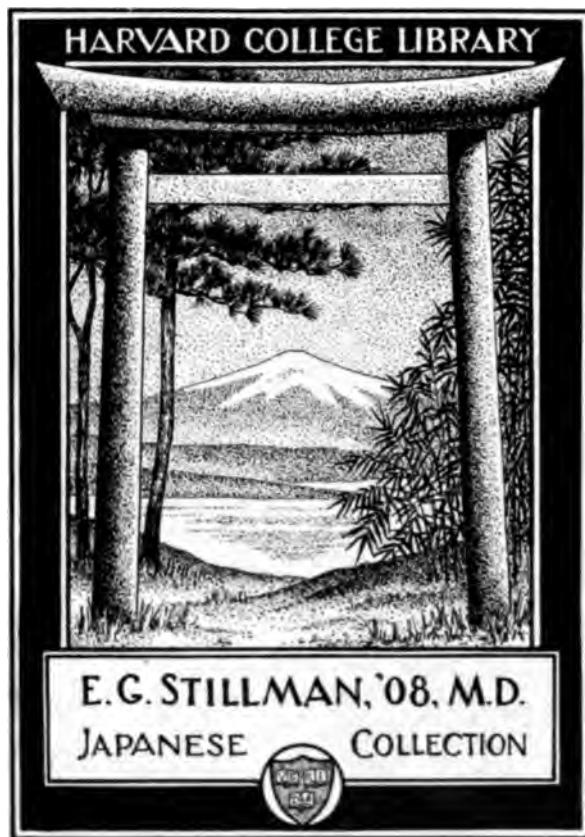
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Mat. Science. Simplicity  
AND MODERN-TECHNICAL ORGANIZATION

KF 876







The  
Adventures  
of  
Her Serene Limpness,  
the  
Moon-faced Princess,  
dulcet and débonnaire.



Be the  
day  
weary,  
or be the  
day  
long

At  
length  
it  
ringeth  
to  
Even-song.







THE ADVENTURES  
OF  
Her Serene Highness,  
THE MOON-FACED PRINCESS,

*DULCET AND DÉBONAIRE.*

BY  
F. ST. J. ORLEBAR.



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*The Adventures*  
of  
*Her Serene Highness*  
the  
*Moon-faced Princess*



**Chapter I.**



HAVE a very simple story to tell you about a very simple person. So very simple is she, that I almost doubt my power of interesting you in her. Perhaps you will wonder what the charm could have been that has drawn me and others to her quaint, peculiar history and adventures.

Never mind. I can but put her before you, and I will begin her little story at once.

Once upon a time—long before Japan was opened up to foreigners, and before little Japanese boys had

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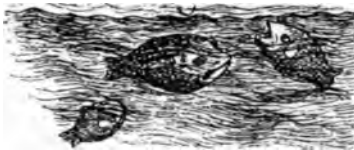
been tortured into sailor dresses and kilts, and before Japanese fathers had taken to black coats and top hats—once upon a time, on a particular day, in a particular year which shall be nameless, the islands of Japan were visited by a most frightful storm, so awful a storm that no vessel could possibly live in it. Yet there was a vessel at that very moment fighting with the waves; a passenger vessel, full of English people, driven by contrary winds straight on to the rocks of one of the islands in the Japanese group, which island shall also be nameless. The stormy day wore on, stretched into night, and by morning the good ship was a wreck, every soul on board drowned, save one.

That one was a young girl of fifteen, the daughter of an Englishman of rank and position in his native country, who, with the girl's mother, and all that belonged to them, had gone down in the big ship.

This young girl was thrown up in the sandy bay amongst some rocks, and on the very top of these rocks rose the Palace of the Mikado. The little bay was, in fact, no other than the small pleasure ground wherein the Members of the Royal Family took their

usual pastime, rowing, swimming, and fishing. Vastly surprised were the big fishes to see, as morning dawned, this human form, lying white and pale in their own enclosure. Fat and shapeless were the Fishes of Japan, lithe and slender was the pale young form. Yet even the Fishes of Japan were too good to mock at her ; they reverently passed her by, unable to help. After a time some of the Court came down to bathe, and a general cry arose at this sad and unusual sight.

Lovingly and gently the girl was raised and carried into the Palace, and after long, and, for some time, fruitless efforts, she was restored to life.



At that time foreigners were carefully excluded from Japan, and no one would, in the ordinary way, have obtained admittance to the Mikado's Palace. But this gentle and kindly people would not drive away this tribute of the ocean to their Ruler, and the young English girl was given her place in the Royal household. She and the Prince, only son of the Mikado,

grew up together, first as brother and sister, later as lovers, latest of all, as Betrothed; at last married, to live, like the lovers of old fairy tales, happily ever after.

For if this can never be said of ordinary people, it was quite true of the dwellers in this Island of the Innocent.

\* \* \* \* \*

One Child blessed their union.

Just One—One Woman Child—No more!

\* \* \* \* \*

Here I pause; for how am I to describe her? She is to be my Heroine, and it behoves me to choose carefully my words, for the task of description is very delicate and difficult.

Now, in speaking of heroines, what do we expect? Generally faultless beauty, grace of form, flowing locks, firm but airy gait.

And how about my Heroine? Truth must out, and I must admit that the Princess possessed none of these charms. From childhood upwards she had no

attractions of this sort. An enormous Head, two big projecting ears, absolute baldness but for a small Tuft of Hair on the very Top, and a slight coating generally of dusky Down; barely any Neck, as will be seen by the view here given; two very fat, unformed Hands, Feet to



match, without one bit of Instep, and a Back so weak that she could never




walk upright, and could with difficulty walk at all.

Having said all this, I gasp for breath, for I foresee your indignation. I fear you will say, "But surely, with such a body, must have been given some compensation in mind; she must have been very talented and witty, a woman whose every word carried weight, or ——" No, stop! before you heap up the agony you are inflicting on the biographer of the Princess.

She had none of these qualities. That large Head of hers held but very little; her Brain was quite unformed; she was quite incapable of coming to any conclusion, or being, in fact, definite in any way.



True, she had flashes of thought, but no power of taking an "all round" view of any subject. She would sometimes seize on the tail of an argument, and seem to grasp it; she would appreciate some detail, but never see it in connection with the whole.

This ability to see trifles expressed itself in her Nose, which was sharp and pointed, and bent rather downwards. Her Nose seemed to look into things more than her Mind. But even her  Nose never retained long its hold on an idea; she had a way of bursting eagerly into a subject, raising expectations, attracting all eyes upon her, and then suddenly breaking off, looking up hazily, as if some difficulty had presented itself, and saying "Ye—es." Every one would look puzzled, the Princess would offer no explanation, and there the subject would drop.

You will be saying, "What then is her charm, and why did you choose her for a Heroine?"

Don't turn away! Don't ruffle yourself, dear Reader! Our Princess had a charm. She had been

given by Nature the most wonderful Pair of almond Eyes that ever fell to the lot of woman, and which gave her a special charm, if not beauty, of her own. In this respect, too, she was unlike any other heroine, for she wholly surpassed them. They have, it is true, "speaking eyes;" but her eyes not only spoke, they carried on whole conversations, and had the power of getting other people to answer them. Some people said they were not quite canny, but every one yielded to their influence. The shape was very long, and the colour very dark, and nearly filled the whole oval, so that hardly any white appeared.

Their smile was something seraphic. They shone alone in a Face which had no other ornament, no eyelashes, no hair, no anything of the usual adornments of woman. All else made way for them, and they shone supreme. Tennyson says, in describing his Princess, "her sumptuous head, and eyes of shining expectation;" but the description would have applied equally well to this very different type, our dear Princess, with her large roll-about Head, and her long, lustrous, and liquid Eyes.

Then one more point I must respectfully mention—

HER TEMPER.

This was the sweetest, gentlest, and sunniest in the whole land, even amongst that gentle and trusting race. No hard thought could by any possibility find a harbour in the Princess's Heart. There was but little of her truly, but that little was good. She was essentially Japanese; there was not a sign of English blood about her. She never understood—literally did not understand—any hard thing said by one person of another. Evil and cruelty and backbiting had never entered into her world or thoughts. Reared as she had been amongst the Japanese, her young mother taken too early from European civilisation and London scandals to have as yet learnt evil, the child grew up in blessed unconsciousness of wrong, and this happy ignorance lasted her through life. Of course this innocence would have been out of place in Europeans; but it did all very well for Japan and its inmates, and, after all, the Princess was not inconveniently better than everybody else. If other people were a

little wiser, they never enlightened her, so that she grew up rather stupid, perhaps—at least, no doubt she was stupid—but very nice.

How little any one ever thought that she would have to knock up against the whole tide of European civilisation, and live with people who had lived on little else than the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil! Thus far her simple Life had flowed on calmly and sweetly amidst the ancient institutions of Japan.



## Chapter II.



IN describing the Princess I should be sorry to give you a mistaken idea of her Person, or to leave you under the impression that her peculiar Face and Form implied anything ugly or ungraceful. Oh no! her Eyes redeemed her Face from ugliness.

Her Face was cast in the true Asiatic mould (but without the slightest cunning), and was warmed by a beaming Smile, which Smile almost seemed translated into the gliding, undulating movements of her Figure. Hers was simply an uncommon type, something unknown in Europe; but it *was* a type, and not merely a monstrosity, and an abortive attempt at being something smarter.

She was as clearly right, according to her type, as a Baby is right in being helpless and big-headed. A little old man, two feet high, would be a horror. Once the Princess had spoken to you with her wonderful Eyes, and betrayed the wealth of innocence and kindness within her soul, you felt that some peculiarly childlike Form must be needed to house appropriately such a naïve and uncommon Nature.

The Princess never ran. We all know what a noise even the most fairy child makes in running overhead. She glided or rather lurched in a not ungraceful way from point to point; it was a very peculiar Gait, but not an ugly one. She never hurried over anything, was never put out, only half understood a difficulty or misfortune, smiled through it all. Sometimes she provoked people, but not often; for the Japanese are not easily provoked. But if she did, she was, and she looked, so unaware of what harm she had done, and, with her

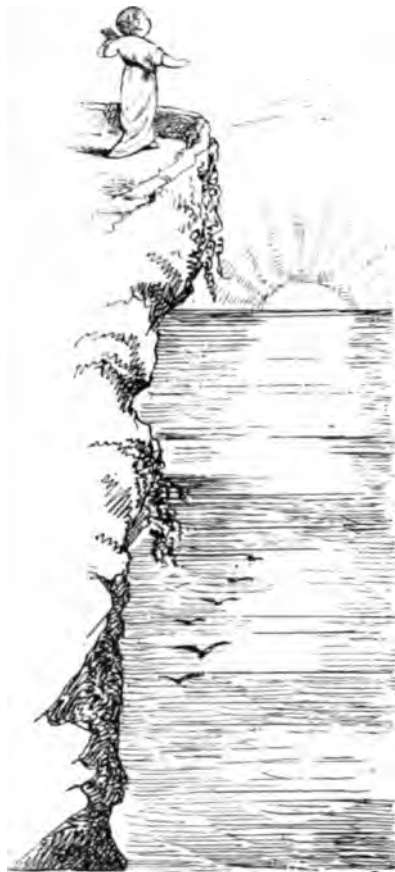


fat, cool Hand laid on her antagonist's, gazed up so sweetly into his face, that she very soon restored herself to favour.

Her food and habits were simple, as all else. After taking her morning bath, her Body was anointed by her attendants with pure vaseline, this oleaginous compound imparting a velvety softness to the skin, that in some indirect way influenced her Temper.

She was always up to greet the Sun, which she watched rising from the battlements of the Palace Gardens.

These gardens were on the very summit of the rocks, which dropped down in an almost sheer



precipice to the bay. At low tide there stretched a narrow band of sand between these rocks and the sea; at high tide this was covered, as was also the foot of the rocks; and the Princess would then amuse herself by sitting on the battlements to hear the splash, as she dropped little pebbles into the water.

In another part of the gardens the rocks were not so steep, and at these places steps and winding walks were contrived to make an access to the sands. At high tide the water came up to the little landing place, where the boats were moored (such queer-shaped boats!), so that at any time the Princess and her attendants could take one, and row themselves about the bay. There were no walls round the Palace grounds, no doors, no locks. It was all free and open to the outside world, but none of the Mikado's subjects would have intruded on Her Highness, or on the privacy of the Court. She would go to *them*, but they never came after her. She wore a silken robe of many hues, a sea-green cord fastened loosely round her waist, a chain of pink coral beads swathed carelessly about her, each perfect bead as big as a



marble. This necklace had no clasp, but somehow it always clung about her, in more or fewer coils, never came off, whatever she was doing. With a great Japanese paper umbrella to guard her bare Head from the sun, she and her maidens would sally forth in search of trouble and sickness, to relieve it; and many a sufferer would welcome the advent of the Princess, and the touch of her small, fat, cool Hand on their aching foreheads.

She had no idea of "stooping" to any sort or condition of men. In Japan it was all "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," for it was all Love and Trust.

But the happiest moments in the life of Her Serene Limpness were those in which she stood, day by day, on the battlements to greet the rising sun, and to watch for his emerging from the sea. She firmly believed him to be a person, and blew a kiss to him as a matter of course. No one troubled to undeceive this quaint Fire Worshipper; her fancies were so natural, and her peculiar belief did her good.

She did not quite worship the sun, but she had a perpetual consciousness of his existence, and her great

shining eyes were so strong, that she could look at him all day long, as eagles do, without blinking. She thought all good came from the sun, and when she could, she took leave of him at night, as she had greeted him in the morning, with a kiss.

Her life had but few incidents. Her Mother taught English to her wonderful child, whom she only half understood, but whom she dearly loved; as who did not? Thus the Princess learnt to repeat long passages from the best English poets, and the language in which she addressed her mother on the commonest topics, unconsciously drawn from these pure fountains of thought, was simply magnificent.

Her Highness's Father watched over her tenderly, but wished she had been a boy. Her grandfather, the Mikado, no doubt thought so too, but he was so intensely pleased with her as a Girl, that he rarely spoke his thoughts. She was very much with him, and their meals were pleasant seasons of wordless intercourse, in which her Eyes spoke more than her Mouth. Her diet consisted of everything that was most unctuous, and devoid of grit or fibre,—oysters,

calf's head, and vegetable marrow boiled in cream, also liquid honey, very thick custard, cream cheese, and purple, almost black, fresh figs, their skins splitting with ripeness. But of all these, though they were almost her only food, the Princess eat but little. Wonderfully little did she eat or drink at any time. Her blood ran very cold in her veins; she always felt cold to the touch, though she was perfectly well.



This absence of blood to the brain may have partially accounted for her inactivity of mind.

As for toys, she had but few, but these were of ingenious build. Her playmates were the queer fishes and monsters, as

we call them, that inhabited the garden and the bay—quaint creatures, not to be seen even in the Zoo. Her little guitar was her treasure; and on this she would execute many weird tunes, without beginning, end, or middle, small melodious *Liederohne*



Inspired



Worte, things that began and ended nowhere, but that stirred you and made you feel, and wake up, and wonder. And then, too, she could put you to sleep again, the little Wizard, but all unconsciously. In the evenings she would sit with her guitar on the battlements playing to the sun; for as the Palace stood on a great rocky promontory, and on a projecting portion of the coast, she could see the sun set as well as rise. The long guitar was supported on one Shoulder, one big Ear bent down upon it, as if she heard the sounds, and were guiding them to the listener's ear. She would smile very sweetly as the sounds stole forth; and then, having drawn out a few very lovely notes, she would stop, and (as people were longing to hear more) wave her fat Hand to the sun, look earnestly at him, turn to gaze into the faces about her with the usual curious look that betokened failing power, and say musingly, "Ye—es." And then they all knew it was over for that night.



### Chapter III.



WHEN the Princess was just sixteen her Mother died. This event caused great mourning throughout the Court and Kingdom. But the Princess, when brought to see her Mother, with her usual inability to realise pain and suffering, except in a very mitigated form, merely said thoughtfully, "She is gone to the Sun," and stood still for some time, looking at her still form, with a dim feeling of respect and affection, but with no lively demonstrations of grief. After a time she knelt down, took the cold hand in hers, and kissed it, once more looked earnestly into the face, but all silently and tearlessly. Then she turned slowly

away, gathered some big Sunflowers, carried them back gravely, laid them all over her dead Mother,



took up her guitar, and played a new little fugue, quite different from her wont, then walked away. She never knew that they had put her Mother underground. She never asked, her Brain was much too hazy; it skipped over all that was painful and earthy. But, after this, whenever she stood or sat on the battlements (for some reason best known to herself, she always stood at sunrise, and sat at sunset) she would add to her other melodies this little Psalm for her Mother, showing she had not forgotten her.

And so her quiet life glided away, till, on one bright



day, a sun arose that was to set for the Princess in very different surroundings to her wont. And it happened in this way.



Her Highness, with two of her women, was one day rowing herself

about in the bay, when, tempted by the lovely and dazzling sheet of water outside, she ordered them to row out to sea. In her usually happy, vague way, she was careering over the slight waves, barely more than an undulating swell, when she caught sight of what proved to be a small English merchant vessel sailing unusually near to land. Now the Princess, who was by no means of a simply contemplative and æsthetic turn of mind, but who (or rather whose Nose) possessed a great genius for investigation, determined to know all about this new object, and whither it was bound. She had often stood on the battlements with her Mother, and watched the foreign ships pass in the distance; but in those days, naturally, no such ship landed on the coast of Japan.

Her Mother, as they would watch together the sun setting in the west, would speak to her of England, and tell her the sun set in the direction of England, her long-lost country. When her Mother died, the Princess got a hazy notion that she had returned to England, the Land of the Setting Sun; and she now thought that this ship was going right away to find her.

This idea about the Sun had been her reason for covering her Mother with sunflowers. No one must think it was want of feeling that prevented the Princess from shedding tears over her Mother, as we western nations should do, it was simply inability to realise death as anything but a sleep, and a going to the Sun; and in her simplicity, she thought if she could but get into that ship, she should find her Mother, and bring her back to the Mikado's Palace. So she ordered her women to row their hardest, and she also took an oar herself, and together they pursued the ship.

It so happened, the wind being unfavourable, the Captain was just about to tack, and chancing to catch sight of the little boat pulling so very hard to meet him, he put up his glass, made sure of the fact, and

ordered that the vessel should be stopped until the boat could be hailed ; it being so unusual for a Japanese boat to take notice of a foreign ship, that he felt it incumbent on him to await the message it probably bore.

As the boat drew nearer, Captain Mackness, a true native of Aberdeen, exclaimed to the Mate, "Weel, and in verra truth! if the wee boatie be not just as full as ever she can hold with twa lassies fore and aft, and a little one between them!" The Mate stared, his full ruddy face looking under his sailor's hat like a rising sun, and hailed the boat's crew somewhat strangely.

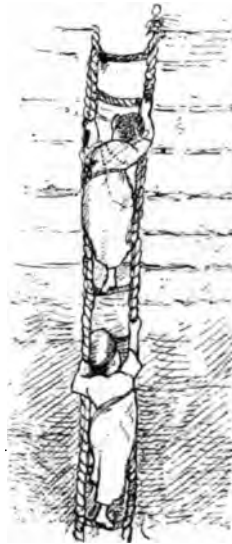
Not being prepared to encounter a party of ladies on the high seas, he exclaimed in his utter surprise, "Hoot awa, mon! what is yer beesness here?" For all answer the Princess smiled upwards, and drew nearer to the vessel.

And then ensued a curious dialogue between the high-born lady, in her very perfect English, and the Skipper in his broad Scotch, which resulted in an arrangement perfectly satisfactory to herself. She

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contrived to learn from him that he was going to England, and that he was willing, at her very urgent request, to take herself and one of her maidens on board. She, not having the most distant idea how far off England might be, and being habitually hazy about time and space, informed her maidens, in pure Japanese, which was lost upon the skipper, that she would be only out for the afternoon, that one maiden was to accompany her, and the other to row about in the bay until her return. Meantime the Princess flattered herself that she should get to and from England, and so bring her Mother home before night.

Whereupon the Skipper lowered a rope ladder from the side of his boat, and the ladies, with some difficulty, mounted it, and soon found themselves afloat on the great Pacific Ocean.



To some minds, the rough appearance of coils of tarred rope, big iron objects of incomprehensible

nature, a heavy anchor, a rather brown deck, sailors in great sou'westers and blue jackets, and all the usual paraphernalia of a trading vessel, with no sort of accommodation for womankind, might have seemed rather alarming and depressing, and it would have been quite reasonable if this particular lady had said that she repented her bargain, and begged to be allowed to return to her gay little skiff, in which sat her one remaining maiden, bobbing up and down on the top of the lazy waves. But not so the Princess. She was bound for England, and to England she would go. Besides, hers was not a nature to make much of discomforts. She could not see the disagreeable or serious side of anything.

The sailors looked at the new arrivals at first to be sure they were quite canny, then feeling satisfied (the Princess's Eyes having done almost more than their wonted work on her behalf), they took no further notice of the Ladies, beyond making them up at one end of the boat a seat on a great coil of ropes, covered with a sail cloth, and thenceforth going on with their own work and devices. Her Highness

gaily took her seat, turning her Face to land to catch the last sight of the Palace and the bay, little guessing how long it might be before she saw that much-loved spot again. The last thing she saw was the little boat floating peacefully in the harbour, after which the land grew more and more indistinct, and at length even the last faint blue was lost to sight, and they were tossing merrily on the broad ocean. But not for one moment did the heart of the Princess fail her, nor did any uneasy thought about the result of her adventure rise to dim her pleasure. On the contrary, she watched with delight the little Fishes come and go about the vessel, dropping down bits of biscuits to them in her cheery fashion, and calling them by all sorts of endearing names, coaxing them to follow in her wake.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meantime the Skipper began to think he had acted rashly in taking such a troublesome cargo on board as two women might prove in case of "durrtty weather." He recalled the few moments' conversation with the Princess, the simple statement of her plans

and wishes, followed by absolute but eloquent silence, the eyes expressing more than any vociferations could have done. He called himself "just an auld fule" for having been overcome by those pleading Eyes of the Princess, and he inwardly assured himself that, if he had had the least chance to do so, he would have put both passengers down on land, before they gave him further trouble. But there was no such chance, as every minute was taking them farther from land; and to set them down at the next port at which they might stop, would be, the Skipper decided, an unmanly proceeding. He was bound on a long trading voyage, returning to England by the Cape of Good Hope, and touching at many places on the way. Yes, indeed, he felt he had been "a Fule" for taking up such company, but it was his own fault, and he must go on. As the Princess had assured him that she was going to her Mother, who would meet her in England, he felt he would have no further trouble with her, once she reached *terra firma*.

As night came on, the Captain began to think how the Ladies would be accommodated, no such things



The look to which the  
Skipper yielded

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as berths being to be found in his vessel. However, he need have had no anxiety on account of our Heroine. One of the sailors offered her his hammock. Need I say that her Eyes were subduing the sailors and every one else, down to the Captain's little boy of ten, who was making his first voyage across the world, and trying to feel as independent of home and mother and creature comforts as a person of ten ought to be, afloat for the first time on a voyage of some importance. But the little boy, used to surreptitious tucking up on the part of that same mother, who was perpetually being told "not to coddle the boy," was keenly alive to the loss of female society, and proportionately delighted to find on board ship two such very amiable-looking people as the Princess and her hand-maiden. To Her Highness the poor little fellow had completely lost his heart before the day was out. He begged her to take his hammock that night, and indeed it would have been



quite long enough for this distinguished Dwarf; for Her Serene Limpness, though full grown, was only five feet high, and could have stretched herself comfortably in the same. But she was quite independent of any such luxuries, and, in her cheery way, announced that she meant to sleep on deck; and, coiling herself round upon some ropes, she showed them how very easily she could sleep. Her plucky, gay spirit was not long in impressing, not one sailor only, but the whole crew, and presently this august Personage had them all at her feet, each pressing upon her the use of his hammock, or any sort of comfort of any kind that he had in his power to bestow. She sweetly and graciously thanked them, in the most exquisite English, but steadily declined all favours, and the sailors reluctantly retired, really sorry not to have had the honour and privilege of helping her.

While this ovation was proceeding the Skipper looked on from a distance, a humorous expression on his good-natured face, and muttering grimly, "Aweel, aweel! Lads maun be lads." And a few minutes

later he might have been heard humming, over his ordinary work, a certain tune in a disjointed fashion. And presently the dreamy humming broke into words as follows :—

“ Dame Nature swears the lovely dears  
Her noblest work she reckons oh !  
Her 'prentice hand she tried on man,  
And then she made the lassies oh !  
Hey ho, the lassies oh !  
Bonnie, bonnie lassies oh !  
Her 'prentice hand she tried on man,  
And then she made the lassies oh ! ”

Which almost looks as if the ovation of the sailors was better understood by their Captain than that humorous, half-contemptuous look would have led one to suppose.

Before going to sleep our little Lady watched for the returning Sun ; and, forthwith producing her guitar, she sang to him one of her very sweet evening melodies, the dulcet strains of which spread in the evening air all about the vessel, bringing to her side and within respectful distance every man who could dare leave his work for a minute to listen. There was something

magical in the sounds, low and enthralling; and when they ceased, the men, who had been almost holding their breath to listen, gradually broke from the spell, but yet half fancied they had been listening to some Lorelei or sea nymph.

The melody ended, Her Serene Limpness wished them all in the most tender fashion Good-night, and composed herself to sleep, as usual, unaware of physical discomforts, her Body rolled up against one hard coil



of ropes, her Head upon another, her guitar by her side, her purse full of gold pieces strung about her Neck, in full sight of the multitude, and in utter and complete trust that no one would deprive her of it.

And there we will leave her for the night, dreaming sweet dreams of the kind sailors, and their good deeds

and wishes on her behalf; of the simple face of the skipper's child, of the sunny waves on which she had tossed in her little boat, of the fishes snapping at her biscuit, of the glorious setting sun, and above all, of the Mother in England, who was in and with that sun; and of the joy of sharing such a home until her Mother should be brought back to Japan, where all were to live happily again ever afterwards.

The moon shone that night on the placid upturned Face of the Princess, and the plain Features became almost beautiful from the smile of peace that lighted it, though the wonderful Eyes were shut.



## Chapter IV.



IN mentioning the little silken purse that hung round the neck of the Princess, I ought to enter a little more fully into its history, as this was no common one. It was a curious combination of silk and old leather, embroidered in antique work, and contained inside two miniatures, one of a young and handsome man in uniform, and the other of a beautiful woman, in the draperies and with the special headgear of Sir Joshua Reynolds' portraits. These were the pictures of the unknown English Grandfather and Grandmother of the Princess. The miniatures were curiously wrought into the purse; and, owing to the protection of the leather, were little the worse for the adventures they had gone through on the memorable night when the

Mother of Her Highness had been wrecked on the shores of Japan.

This little bag had been found hanging round the young Englishwoman's neck ; and after her death it had been transferred to that of the Princess. This purse was generally well filled with gold ; and when Her Highness wished to bestow "*largesse*," she had a broad and ample manner of gracefully extracting a shining piece from its silken depths, and presenting it with a sweet smile to her *protégés*, who generally accepted it gratefully, forgetting to look at the value of the coin until the fascination of the smile was withdrawn.

On the first morning of her life on board ship the Princess awoke to greet the rising sun, and to tune her little harp anew, but never thought of looking to see if the money in her purse was safe. Of course it was all right, for though every one saw it to be a purse, there was not a man on board who would take advantage of such sweet trustfulness. And she sang her little hymn in very low, subdued tones, and tuned her little lyre in perfect calm and peace.



And so her days on deck passed by. She had certainly been a little surprised at first to find England so much farther off than she had anticipated, but she resigned herself with great composure to the prospect of a longer voyage, and seemed rather to enjoy it.

At first the Captain had been uneasy about her, feeling that the hard fare of sailors was not fit to put before these gentle ladies. Gentle he instinctively felt them to be, though the Princess, without purposely avoiding the disclosure, had never happened to allude to her rank. Captain Mackness judged her to be a gentlewoman by her courtesy and consideration for the feelings of every one on deck. She never gave unnecessary trouble, but rose cheerfully and gracefully to every occasion, making herself happy and content with captain's biscuit and salt junk, though we will not pretend to say that she did not miss, just a little, her vegetable marrow, her clotted cream, and her oysters.

In fine weather she perambulated the ship with her own peculiar lurching Gait, stopping now and then (at least, her Nose impelled her to stop) to ask

questions about some little detail, the answers to which were quite unintelligible, as she knew nothing of the working of a ship. She used to look with wondering eyes at the sailors going up the rigging. Her strong eyes never tired of looking up in this way.

One day a sailor said to her, in chaff, "Just *you* try to swarm the mast, Missie!" Irony was not at all understood in Japan, where people said quite quaintly and literally what they meant. So the Princess thought that she was bidden to go, and having so little powers of calculation that she had no idea of the difficulty of any task, she softly answered, "I'll try," and began, with her two fat, nerve-



less Hands, to lay hold on the big mast, and to put one dear, limp Foot on a rope that hung from it. A more happy illustration of strength and weakness than that mast and that aspiring figure presented can hardly be conceived. After trying, first with one Foot and then with the other, and also shifting the position of her fat Hands to get a better grip some other way, she gave up the idea of ever reaching the bird-like elevation to which her strong sight had attained, and



meekly said, turning her almond Eyes pathetically on the sailor, "I can't." "No, Missie, don't try!" said the sailor, "that isn't work for tender ladies like you; sit you down here!" and he arranged her a most comfortable seat on some cordage, his own jacket top of all, and set

her down with her lyre to play her little tunes to the fishes, who followed the vessel in shoals, drawn on

by the music. Their shining backs, seen through the transparent water, caused the path of the vessel to appear traced in silver. At this sight the Princess would clap her Hands exultingly, and awake her sleepy woman to rejoice in her triumph.

But it was not only in fine weather that Her Highness enjoyed life; she came out almost more characteristically in a storm. In such weather as would cause a captain to order all women down below, hatchways closed, and so forth, this Woman sat exultingly on deck, lashed, as a matter of necessity, to a fixture; but from that firm post rejoicing and delighting in the stir. Certainly she had no sense of danger or physical discomfort.

Not so the Skipper's young son, who missed his mother on these occasions more than he liked to own.

When the storm raged about the ship he flew to the Princess for protection; the big waves dashed over them both, but she was perfectly calm, always took her seat in the bows of the boat, where the movement was greatest, so that she was always either in the trough of a wave, or borne aloft upon its crest, she

and her good ship quite out of the water, and a look of the most serene triumph on her Face, as if she were simply enjoying a game of see-saw, and it were her turn to go up. Her maiden always took the cue from her Mistress, but she was of a different type, and had not the Princess's spirit and courage. The English blood of the latter might, in part, account for this unusual daring, combined, as it was, with the calm trustfulness of the Japanese character.

The time at last drew near for the vessel to near the English coast, and one night, wrapped in a shawl which had been concealed by a tender mother amongst the outfit of the small sailor boy (for in these latitudes it certainly began to feel a little chilly), Her Highness resigned herself to sleep. She knew they were nearing England, and by force of contrast her thoughts flew to Japan. She recalled in a dream every incident of her last day there, the very day on which she had rowed out to sea and fallen in with the sailors.

Once more she was standing on the battlements, the wide blue sea below her, the water lazily tumbling

on the rocks, in what would have been waves, if the sea had felt less languid. The white sea-birds skimmed the water below her feet, the little creeping plants grew on the warm stone beneath her Hand. In her dream she realised how warm the stone was ; yet, in the burning sun, there she stood in comfort, under the shade of her paper parasol. The turrets of the Palace glistened in the sun, gorgeous in gilding, and between it and the Royal child lay a stretch of many coloured shrubs and flowers. Above her head grew a great shrub of immense chrysanthemums, the national flower of Japan, and beside her a plant of borage, her favourite flower. She loved the hazy way in which the soft green-grey of the borage broke out here and there into a bright blue blossom. There was a casual air about these flowers that was in harmony with the Princess's cast of mind. She loved to twist about a spray gently in her hand, casting lights, first on one part of the foliage, then on another. As the hairy spikes shone in the sun her own Face brightened, and she would say naively, "I am making the flower smile."

And so, on this memorable day, she had been playing dreamily with a bit of borage ; but getting tired of this amusement, she thought she would go down to the sea, and she proceeded to step carefully down the rocky path on her bare Feet (for the Princess never wore shoes). On this path she had to pass a small rocky basin, into which and out of which ran a little stream ; and round the basin swam and darted, in the erratic way peculiar to themselves, many gold and silver fishes. They all looked as if some idea had suddenly occurred to them, which entailed a quick change of place and movement.

The Princess, or rather her Nose, became interested in these movements of the gold fish, regarded in detail, though she did not care to investigate the general scope and plan of a gold fish's life. So she thought she would like to catch one, and discover its reasons for such hasty decisions.

Thereupon she plunged her two small fat Hands into the warm, sunny water. She aimed at a very grand fish, and for some time the chase amused her.

But as she, so very often, nearly caught the fish,

and then saw it wriggle away, a slow sense of disappointment came on, a feeling to which she was, as yet, unused. She had never been called upon to bear disappointment, and she felt this in a strange and unexpected way, as if it were a bad omen. She really could not



catch the fish. But the sun was warm, the air balmy, and the sea glittering; and troubles are soon cured in such surroundings. So she left the gold fish in the water, walked to the landing-place, manned her little boat, and put out to sea, floating at last on the great wide ocean where she met the Skipper and her fate.

All this had really happened, and it returned very vividly in the dream. Perhaps her Mind had been



wrought up by the thought of soon meeting her Mother, and finding herself, after much discomfort on the voyage, actually in the Land of the Setting Sun.

Her anticipations of England, its warmth and glory, were proportionate to the ideas that a sun, setting in the sea, amid radiant clouds, might be supposed to inspire. She was now close to this Enchanted Land,



and her dreams were of sunlit air, and ruby fruits peeping out from nests of golden leaves, when—



## Chapter V.



HE awoke, to find that the ship had reached home, and that the scene was just what might have been expected on a drizzling, raw day, and in the heart of the London docks. She awoke to the clang of chains, and the nautical sing-song of sailors, all dragging at ropes, and shouting at each other.

The Royal Child stood up, dazed and bewildered, to see around her what seemed at first sight an undefined wilderness of dark grey and brown, dull yellow sky overhead; tall, dark brown buildings, streaked with black all about; great dark, black-brown and stone wharves close at hand; brown and black ships, with a dash of murky red in the sails; and an everlasting network of cordage overhead.

On the quay, dark, dull-blue waggons, attached to which stood listlessly three or four very dirty-white horses ; men shouting to each other in the noisy hurried way that we can all recall as part of the usual business of a ship unlading. Every single thing that met the eye of the Stranger was dark, grim, dusky, and frowning ; and the Darling of Japan stood as one Flower thrown alive on to a cinder heap, surveying, but quite unable to comprehend.

Was this the Land of the Setting Sun ? Could this be England ? And was her Mother really here, living in all this darkness ?

A terrible tightness laid hold on the childlike Heart, a something it had never felt before. But the thought of her Mother sustained her ; she was sure she would be with her presently. She stood quite still amongst the cordage, in very meek, unconscious dignity, keeping to that end of the vessel where she would be least in the way, and where she was, in fact, unnoticed. Then, at last, her weak Ankles failing her, she sat down ; and after what seemed to her hours of patient waiting, she saw the Captain coming towards her, his chief



*Patient waiting.*



duties accomplished. Sad misgivings were slowly creeping over her ; and when she saw her friend approaching, she lurched towards him with hands outstretched, exclaiming, "Where's my Mother?"

The Captain looked astonished, and remarked, "Weel, Missie, that's what I'd fain ken myself. Whaur's your Mither? Didna ye tell me yer ain sen that ye were going to meet your Mither?"

"Oh yes," said the Princess, in her very distinct high-bred English, "but where is she?" (I must here remark that our Heroine, having only learnt English from her Lady Mother, spoke usually in the most classic style, her words borrowed chiefly from Shakespeare and Spenser ; but that, during the voyage, she had picked up the expressions of the Scotch sailors, and, combining the two forms of speech, fell into a style of her own that was decidedly unique.)

"Weel!" said the skipper, "what are we to do wid ye, I'd like to know? Say the word, and I'm your mon."

"Aweel, aweel!" sighed the Princess, after a short

pause of unproductive thought, "I dinna ken. I'll e'en wrap my weeds around me, and go forth."

"Na, na! *that* ye sall na do," cried the skipper, who was far too chivalrous to allow this poor child of nature to go forth unprotected into the murky streets of the city. "I'll just tak ye hame to my wife, and she'll tak care of ye baith the nicht, and to-morrow maybe your Mither 'll come for ye to the docks. Maybe she'll just have mistaken the day."

The Princess thanked him with a look, and said no more; but in her Heart rang the words, "Where's your Mither?" and, if her Eyes had not been so liquid by nature as to preclude the possibility of their becoming more so, one might have suspected that an unshed tear lent them a little extra brightness. She only knew that she felt very much as she had done when the gold fish declined to be caught, as if she were in vain pursuit of something desirable, and a sad feeling of depression, born of the river fog, closed her in on every side. But she looked forward to evening and the setting sun, and the thought of

seeing him in his glory, before many hours were past, comforted her and helped her on.

So the skipper, having arranged his affairs at the dock, and given instructions to his crew, resolved, without further loss of time, to deposit his rather troublesome cargo at home, and set off at a brisk pace, leaving the women and child to bring up the rear.

But, my good man, consider before you step out in that sturdy way whom you have in tow!

The lurching steps of the Princess, though strained to their utmost speed, could in no way keep up with the captain's strides. In vain did she say, "I'll try." The task was beyond her power, and she would have been left behind, utterly stranded in that great, dirty city, but that the boy ran forward and overtook his father before a corner of the street had hidden him from sight. The kind-hearted captain was struck with remorse to think he could so far overlook the helplessness of his charge; but positively, he had not reflected that the Princess, who was as brave as a man in the storms, was physically so helpless, and so



very weak on her Feet. He exclaimed below his breath, "Hoot, mon! and would ye lave the puir lassies in the streets all night? Shame on ye, Donald Mackness!" And with these words he turned back, and met his strange charges struggling along the



very middle of the narrow lane, in danger of being run over by the first trundling wagon. What a

pathetic sight it was that met his eye! Two small women, but one by far the smaller of the two, dressed in a many-coloured silken robe, bound with a very loose sea-green cord, a little bag dangling from the Neck, bare Feet, bare Arms, and bare Head, which Head lay languidly back over one Shoulder; the whole Figure swathed and wreathed in chains of pink coral, and supporting on the left Arm a strange outlandish guitar. Any one might have taken the weary little Figure for a strolling player; and when, from



*"Move on!"*



utter stupefaction and weariness, she sat down in a corner to rest, she might have been told by a policeman to "Move on!" Oh awful thought! It flashed across the skipper's breast, and he determined that nothing should make him desert that lone little Woman (who was just now raising her pathetic almond Eyes to his) until he saw her safely into the hands of her friends. Just as he was wondering how he should get her conveyed to his home, a waggon, heavily laden with barrels, came in sight, groaning up the narrow street from the water's edge. It belonged to a friend of his, and bore a well-known name; so he hailed it, and asked for a lift for the ladies. This was granted, and as the Princess made her triumphant entry into London, mounted on whiskey barrels, her spirits began to revive, and she declared to herself that she should no doubt very soon see her Mother, and that, at any rate, there would be the glorious setting sun to speak to before night. There is no denying that she enjoyed her ride, mounted up so high, her four broad-backed dray horses, tugging away bravely at their load, looking like mice so far below

her. At that height she could almost look in at the second-floor windows of the warehouses that they passed, and was face to face with great staring advertisements, letters half a foot high, of "Colman's Mustard," "Dr. Ridge's Patent Food," etc. But these were a mystery to our little foreigner, she never having seen English printed, except casually in the Bible of the captain's boy; and not having had the curiosity to learn to read it, she did not know what these big letters meant, and so mistook them for pictures, dimly wondering what scenes in the life of the English they were intended to represent.

She came to the conclusion that the letters figured a gymnastic apparatus, such as she had seen in use amongst jugglers and acrobats in Japan. She took an I for a climbing-pole, P for a ring supported on an upright for taking a leap through off a horse's back, H was a trapeze, M a swing, and so forth. To a deeper thinker, it might have seemed strange that the English should be so wholly given over to athletics as to devote every spare wall to a representation of the national mania; but this was too

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"all round" a view for Her Highness to take. She only saw things in detail. Such thoughts as she had she kept to herself, knowing that her attendant was not of a thinking turn, and would not have thought it respectful to differ.

Thus, in silence, they reached the Skipper's abode, all abreast, Father and Son on the pavement, the ladies on the Waggon.

The joy of the Mother in once more embracing her husband and son need hardly be dwelt upon, nor her surprise on finding what an extraordinary addition had been made to their home party. Certainly her husband was in the habit of bringing home strange pets,—parrots and marmozettes,—and once, only once, a monkey; but two women or children—for by their size it was difficult to tell which they were—this was rather too much! However, Mrs. Mackness was too happy to say much, and the Princess's eyes, as usual, did their work, so that it was soon settled that the ladies should remain for a day or two, until the much-talked-of Mother turned up.

Her Highness, no doubt, thought the English home

very small and narrow after the Palace to which she had been accustomed; but her bright nature asserted itself as usual, and she was soon at home with the Mother,—the strongest bond of union being called into play by the latter observing the evident devotion of her little Donny to the stranger.

Mrs. Mackness soon saw all she owed to Her Highness's gentle care of the little son, and she felt no difficulty in giving her a welcome, without any thoughts of repayment.

But, to their surprise, the august Guest, before she had been very long in the house, and while their frugal meal was being despatched, took out her silken purse, and drew from it four or five gold pieces, laying them simply before the Captain, with a look that implied, "Oblige me by appropriating them!" The good man looked at them in astonishment, and forthwith thrust down his two hands deep into his trouser-pockets, as if to keep them out of harm's way.

"Na, na, my leddy!" he exclaimed, "put up yer siller! You're giving me a hantle too much. One broad piece is owre muckle for your trip. Put up the

•

rest. Ye'll want it before long." And as the Princess showed no signs of understanding, he swept the gold pieces together, and shovelled them back into her purse, all except one, which he kept, but never spent, in memory of that remarkable passenger.

A small attic was put at the disposal of the Princess and her woman by Mrs. Mackness, who made it as comfortable as she could ; and from the window of the same our Heroine waited and watched as she thought sunset must be approaching. She sat with her guitar on her arm, gazing on the tall warehouses and the murky sky, waiting and watching for the great blaze of glory.

At length, seeing no splendid mass of fire in the heavens, she thought she must have mistaken the time, and went downstairs into the parlour. "When sinks the god of day?" she asked in classic language from the matter-of-fact Mrs. Mackness. The latter stared and pondered, and tried to realise what the question meant ; then, being a woman of superior education, it dawned upon her that the sun might possibly be alluded to. However, she thought best to make sure.



"When *what*, my dear?" she inquired.

"When sinks the god of day?" repeated the Princess.

"When leaves he in heaven the fiery clouds as cast-off raiment, and sinks beneath the waves of ocean to his rest?" This she said with admirable simplicity, and unconsciousness that she was expressing herself in archaic terms.

"Do you mean, my dear," inquired Mrs. Mackness, "that you want to know when the sun sets?"

"Ye—es," said the Princess dreamily.

"Oh, the sun set long ago, this hour,—I should think," replied Mrs. Mackness briskly. "Why, it's near upon seven o'clock."

"Hoot awa, mon!" cried the Princess in despair; "ye suld have tellkt me that afore, laddie!" she added, catching up the words of a song that she had often heard sung by the sailors. Her sorrow at having missed the sunset, and for having, almost for the first time in her life, omitted her parting hymn, was touching to see; and the good woman could but comfort her in the best way she understood, but with an ardent desire that "the mother" might appear before long.



*Silent despair.*



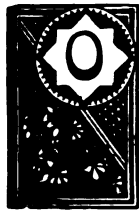
As she said to her husband afterwards, "It wasn't that Missie made any fuss or sound, but she looked *that sorry!* and however will she get on in England if she makes such a piece of work about not seeing the sun set? Why, you may live in these parts mostly all the year round, and never see the sun set or rise."

Meanwhile the forlorn Potentate had slipped away to her attic, and following the lead of her own mournful thoughts, cast herself down opposite the hideous buildings in an attitude of despair, one hand across her beloved lyre, the other feebly clutching at vacancy. "No Mother, no home, no sun! All gone and lost!" This was the burden of her thoughts; but, in all her trouble, she was perfectly silent and tearless.

Mrs. Mackness little knew the special associations of the sunset for our Heroine, and how nearly it was connected with thoughts of her absent Mother.



## Chapter VI.



OUR Princess had survived two great shocks in one day, but her temperament being naturally of the most elastic, she soon began to get over her troubles, and to feel sure that she would not only find her Mother very soon, but also would be able to return with her to Japan, on which place she now fixed all her thoughts, England having proved such a disappointment.

The first step in her proposed programme clearly was to perambulate the streets of the city till she should find her Mother; and, though realizing very faintly the magnitude of the task, she yet saw it to be hard, and that there was nothing for it but to say, "I'll try."

She therefore asked next morning if Captain

Mackness would take her to the docks to meet her Mother, since she quite accepted his idea that there was some mistake about the day. Mrs. Mackness, before she started off the helpless pair (little did she realize how helpless they really were), gave the Princess many directions as to the turns she must take to find her way home, all which hints fell like water off the duck's back, our Heroine not taking in one word. The little boy was to be their guide, and, after depositing them at the docks, was to go farther on some other errand, it being supposed that the distance was so short, the ladies could find their way home alone. Captain Mackness, who really knew but little of Her Highness's character, not having had opportunity, during a rather stormy voyage, to study it much, had no idea how unbusinesslike she was; but still, seeing a hazy look upon her face while the wife's directions were being given, he said, "Look'ee here, my little leddy, don't 'ee go about with all that siller slung round your neck. Folks ain't all they ought to be down at the docks, you know. Just hand over that purse to the gude wife, and here are some

bawbees for you" (which the Princess immediately did, with a frank smile, and air of touching confidence). "Maybe ye'll want a few bawbees, and if you're in straits, and canna find your road home, gang yer ways to one of them big men, see ye?" he said, taking her to the window, and pointing out a passing policeman of gigantic stature, "and ask your way home again. Wife, write down the street and number; she may forget it. There, my lass," he continued, handing her the address and a little leather purse with a three-penny piece in it and some halfpence, "put that round your neck, and show it to the big man if you're in wants, and come home to yer dinner!"

Having thus made all provision for the safety of the unfledged birds, the skipper saw them depart under the care of his little son, with no misgivings concerning their future. And off they went cheerily, the Princess utterly unaware that London was somewhat less honest than Japan. The boy deposited the helpless pair at the dock, and went his way, they spending their time vaguely looking about them in hopes of seeing the Daughter of the Moon. But in

vain! The Princess looked up sweetly into the faces of one or two dockmen, and kept saying, "To the west! to the west!" thinking there must be some place farther west, and nearer the setting sun, to which this dull and dreary region acted only as vestibule.

"To the west?" one man answered, in abrupt, laconic fashion. "Well, if you want to go to the West End, you'd better go by underground—or stop! you'll go cheaper by penny boat."

The Princess smiled assent, and hearing of a penny, held up one of her bawbees, which action the man took for consent, and good-naturedly trotted them over some gangways from one barge to another, till by some magic, and by dint of quicker walking than they had ever before practised, they found themselves on the deck of a penny steamer, bound westwards up the river.

But before going on to this experience, the reader should be told of a little mental exercise that the Princess went through.





The young man said, "You only gave me a penny; and there's a pair of you, ain't there? Look sharp! another penny!"

Her Highness, not fully aware of the value of the English coinage, opened her purse, and held it up confidingly to the youth that he might help himself. He took out the threepenny piece, returning to her her own penny and one extra, and saying, as he clapped the change down into her hand, "Here you are!"

The Princess, not knowing this was an expression, lifted her eyes inquiringly, and said simply, "Oh yes, here I am;" and in her own mind she added, "What did he mean? How could I be anywhere else? He is *there*, and I am *here*. I couldn't be *there*, or it wouldn't be me. What did he mean?" But this thought was too deep and metaphysical to be pursued to its limits, and the Princess gave up guessing, and was soon wholly engrossed in the pleasures of the moment. Their good-natured friend helped them to a place, and they sat down in peace and comfort. People on board stared for a minute at their strange disguise; but taking them for "Indian jugglers, who made a

trade of dressing-up," they offered them no insult. The whistle shrieked, the black clouds of smoke puffed up, to the intense surprise of our travellers, and they were off.

They felt quite amused at the lines of buildings that floated past them, as they imagined, for they had no idea that they were in motion themselves, having never been upon any large moving thing, except the deck of the merchant vessel, of whose personal powers of pitching there could be no doubt.

They watched the shore with interest, and the Princess's Nose discovered many details of interest, though the general purport of the voyage was a mystery to her.

At length they reached their destination ; the steamer went no farther, and the two friends were hustled off the boat, and found themselves literally "alone in London."

But nothing daunted or, in fact, the least uneasy, they pursued their way, commenting to each other on the shops, the passers-by, the omnibuses, and every other trifle ; but on none with greater interest than the policemen, whose dress riveted their attention.

They had heard the Skipper call the Policeman the "big man;" and this being the term always applied in Japan to the Mikado, and to him only, and our little foreigners not being aware that "big" was intended in a physical sense, fancied that this Policeman was a great ruler or Mikado, a notion much strengthened by the grandeur of his helmet and outer man generally. When they saw many policemen all in the same costumes, they thought in their hazy, spiritualizing way that it was but one Mikado, in many earthly forms; and they had a comfortable feeling that the English Mikado was with them everywhere, so that they felt sure any member of the force could at once communicate in spirit with the individual pointed out by the Skipper, and that they would quickly be transferred by his means to the bit of street where they had first seen him through the window. Had the Princess only known it, she had reason to feel uneasy at going about the streets swathed in her priceless coral; but no one of her fellow-passengers ever took the necklace for anything but mock beads. And it was thus that she worked her way safely through her

It would not hurt *her*, whatever was thought about *them*. And what a "draw" it would be! Two real live Japanese faces amongst the dolls! A chance not to be overlooked. Every one would stop to buy. So, making up her mind that she must keep a sharp look out that they did not rob her, and winking to a shop-assistant with a look which meant "Two upon ten!" she allowed them to take their places. And there they stood calmly and happily, unconscious of criticism, and enjoying their day hugely. This was a real "day out;" this was something like "London" at last. True, a different London to what the Princess had dreamed, but still a delightful place. Only to see the omnibuses, the men, the women, the little children! They pointed with their thick fingers to all they thought most attractive; and never failed to exclaim to each other "Mikado!" when they saw a Policeman pass by. The ladies drew crowds to the shop, and would have realised themselves to be quite deserted towards night, had they had any thoughts to spare for their companions of the morning. The woman had not done such a brisk day's business for months. She was very

till they reached the Strand ; and here, wandering up a narrow street, they came, without a word of warning, on a toy shop right in front of them, with a window perfectly full of Japanese dolls and other toys. How transfixed both stood with silent delight ! There were the big heads, thick wrists and ankles, smiling faces, and general beaming look of welcome and happiness.

The wanderers were enchanted, and lost no time in crossing the street and entering the shop. The shop-woman stared at them, as if she thought two of her own dolls had grown bigger, and gained the power of motion ; and they looked lovingly at her in return. Then the Princess, in classic English, demanded that they might go and sit amongst the dolls ; in fact, proposed nothing less audacious than that they should do as the dolls did, stand in the window and watch the street. It was some time before the Princess's English percolated to the toy-woman's brain ; but when she did understand, she gasped inwardly. However, not having sold much that day, her wits were sharpened, and a grand idea occurred to her.

Why not let these strange creatures have their way ?

It would not hurt *her*, whatever was thought about *them*. And what a "draw" it would be! Two real live Japanese faces amongst the dolls! A chance not to be overlooked. Every one would stop to buy. So, making up her mind that she must keep a sharp look out that they did not rob her, and winking to a shop-assistant with a look which meant "Two upon ten!" she allowed them to take their places. And there they stood calmly and happily, unconscious of criticism, and enjoying their day hugely. This was a real "day out;" this was something like "London" at last. True, a different London to what the Princess had dreamed, but still a delightful place. Only to see the omnibuses, the men, the women, the little children! They pointed with their thick fingers to all they thought most attractive; and never failed to exclaim to each other "Mikado!" when they saw a Policeman pass by. The ladies drew crowds to the shop, and would have realised themselves to be quite deserted towards night, had they had any thoughts to spare for their companions of the morning. The woman had not done such a brisk day's business for months. She was very

civil to "the ladies," and offered them some tea, taking care to put it in a Japanese tea-set, so as to make the hospitality useful in the general "draw." The ladies, sitting opposite each other, smiling and chatting in Japanese, and drinking tea out of blue-and-white cups without handles, were a fortune in themselves.

So there they sat until closing time came, and the woman wanted to put up her shutters. Then she told them they must go. "Go?" said the Princess. "Whither away?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the woman; "*I* don't want you any longer."

The friends looked at each other, perfectly vague about their locality, or means of returning home, and while they were so doing, the woman took them roughly by their shoulders, and pushed them on to the pavement, locking the shop door in their faces.

No exclamation, so natural under the circumstances, escaped from either of them. For a minute they stood quite still, the ten toes on each pair of feet facing each other; then, with childlike composure, they turned round, and took a few steps thoughtfully side



*The "draw."*

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by side. The Princess, feeling that she was in command of this day's expedition, was revolving in her mind the possibility of walking home, and was mentally saying "I'll try;" her woman was leaving the thinking to her mistress, not feeling it incumbent on her to have ideas of her own.

In this moment of perplexity she raised her eyes, and in the extreme distance to which her eagle eyes could penetrate, she saw a vision, and rapturously exclaimed, "A Mikado!!" This was hope indeed, and fortunately the big man was coming their way.

Patient dignity being an attribute of their race, they awaited his arrival, and when he was within a reasonable distance, with arms uplifted, lurched towards him, crying out, "Mikado! Mikado!"

He fancied they were foreigners begging, and said, short and sharp, "Not allowed in London!"



But the Princess took the address out of her purse, and quoting probably from Mrs. Hemans, or some other authoress of the same date, remarked, "Lost children of a sunny clime! whither away? whither away?"

The Policeman stared, suspected them to be lunatics, and said, as he read the address, "I say, young women! where do you hang out? Is this your address? Sure you're not escaped from Colney Hatch?"

"Ye—es," said the Princess, not understanding the question, but luckily answering right.

"Well," he said, "you'd better make haste and get home, or I shall have to put you in the lockup for the night."

To most people these would have seemed rough words, but these two were so unaccustomed to roughness, that they did not accept them as such, or feel daunted. They had often noticed that the English had a peculiar and incomprehensible way of "locking up" their valuables, and they therefore only saw this suggestion as a mark of respect and kindness on the part of the Policeman; in the warmth of their hearts



*"Taken up by a Bobby at last!"*



each at once possessed herself of one of his hands, holding it between her own, and walking with him side by side, as if he had been their Father.

He was so completely overcome by this mark of confidence, and by the upturned, childlike eyes, that he changed his tone instantly, and said, kindly, "Well, here's my pal just on the spot. I can see you home before I go in to supper. I reckon you'll be lost if I leave you." And therewith the "big man" hailed an omnibus, and popped his *protégées* into it, getting in with them.

At this juncture, a street arab, who had been watching with interest this little scene, and its termination, having had an eye on the ladies since the morning, applied his thumb to his nose tip, jeeringly, and winking saucily at the little pair, exclaimed, "Taken up by a Bobby at last!" And the poor Princess, as she wearily tumbled on to the seat of the crowded omnibus, caught his words, and in the full tide of her gratitude echoed them, much to the amusement of her fellow-passengers. With a sigh of relief, she exclaimed, "Taken up by a Bobby at

last!" One fat hand was suddenly slipped into that of "No. 150X," and two gentle Eyes raised to his, as if she never could express her sense of his fatherly goodness.

The little ladies would have preferred seeing life from the outside of the omnibus, but they were happy anywhere. Their kind friend took them straight home, to the relief of Mrs. Mackness, who had been expecting them for hours.

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a very active Conservative M.P. By nature she was true and honest ; she had seen a good deal of life, and was a thorough woman of the world, without being in the least worldly. In fact, Lady Gwen combined in rare measure the power to judge kindly, speak plainly, and act courteously. Need it be said that this bright, strong, good-looking woman had a few foes, but many friends ? And among her humble friends and servants ranked Mrs. Mackness, who had, before her marriage, occupied the post of confidential maid-housekeeper to Lady Gwen's mother. And still Mrs. Mackness had the happiness of working for "dear Lady Gwen," for she helped to carry out the charitable schemes of the latter for the dock labourers in that neighbourhood, as mission woman and general almoner.

She was just now writing to Her Ladyship on some of these subjects, and added :—

"I am quite in perplexity just now, but ought not to trouble your Ladyship about it. As I told your Ladyship, my husband returned yesterday from his voyage, but I did not name that he brought with him

two Japineese females ; they seem to be young ; they are certainly very strange. One of them wears round her neck a sort of bag-purse, with two minnitures set inside it. One of the pictures is a gentleman in regimentles ; the other is a lady with her hair all drawn up. There is a lot of gold pieces in the purse, which, my husband says, is Japinese coins. The one young person speaks English beautiful ; the other don't speak English at all."

\* \* \* \* \*

*"Next day.*

"I take up my pen again, my Lady, as I could not finish this yesterday, having felt in such an upset the whole afternoon, owing to the two young females going out and getting lost. They were brought home by a policeman. They seem so helpless, poor things ; I can't bear to turn them adrift, but I ask my husband, whatever did he bring them home for ?

"With my duty to your Ladyship, and apologising for troubling you, I am,

"Your Ladyship's humble servant,

"SARAH MACKNESS."

When this letter arrived, Lady Gwen was sitting in the pretty boudoir of her country house in Berkshire. She mastered carefully all the first part before she even read the end; but when she came to the last few lines she read quickly, next time breathlessly, then broke off, pondered for a few minutes with knit brows, then read once more. At length, she exclaimed inwardly, and half aloud, "Most extraordinary coincidence! A little purse with two miniatures set in it. I am certain I ought to know something of that purse. . . . There was some old story. . . . Now, what *was* it? Who *was* it told me? . . . Ah, I remember! it was old Lady Glencartney. . . . Yes, of course! . . . It was she who was telling that story to my mother when I was a girl, about a young couple. . . . I think it was some relations of her own. . . . They couldn't have been so *very* young either, for they had a daughter almost grown up. . . . But I remember they had their pictures done for her in Rome by an Italian artist, and put into a purse. They were on a voyage round the world, and they all got drowned somehow, the

girl too. It all comes back to me now, though it's so long since I heard it. I must go up to town and see the purse and Lady Glencartney at once. . . . What a mercy she is still alive! She will tell me all the details."

So, to the great astonishment of Mrs. Mackness, the following day saw Lady Gwendoline knocking at her humble door, and after mutual greetings the two "young females" were brought in, and presented to her. As the Princess, with her woman behind her (merely acting as foil to her principal), stood in the doorway, her head slightly back and on one side, gliding gently forward on one broad, bare Foot, looking ineffably sweet and Oriental, Lady Gwendoline caught her breath in rapture. It was she who was taken aback, not the Royal Stranger. The Princess just paused in the doorway, and in the gravest fashion blew a kiss off her fat finger tips, accompanied by a melting glance from her luminous Eyes.

The woman of the world was fully as much *attendrie* as had been the sailors, the skipper, or the policeman, and rising from her seat, quickly clasped the child (for such she thought her) in her arms, and

kissed her. The Princess was a little astonished, not to say ruffled, by this Occidental embrace. In Japan they never went farther than to blow kisses. The august Personage immediately sneezed, much in the way a kitten does, a small dainty sneeze, that became her infinitely. In this way she seemed to rid herself



of the oppression caused by too effusive a form of affection. She then looked at Lady Gwen over her shoulder as she gathered her robes together and walked slowly away, and the look contained as near an approach to grave displeasure as her Features were capable of assuming.

In her encounter with women of fashion Lady Gwen had never felt so seriously rebuked. After a proper pause Her Highness sneezed again ; then, in a small, dignified way, recovered herself, winked her grand eyes slowly twice, and after another suitable pause, suddenly turned them beaming in their liquid

beauty on Lady Gwendoline, as much as to say, "We'll be friends; but don't do it again!" With that she laid her cool hand in Lady Gwendoline's palm, and left it there confidingly. Lady Gwen was speechless with delight. She was a woman who loved originality, and seldom saw it. In London there was such a frightful amount of staleness. People constantly tried to be original, and were merely eccentric. There was no doubt about it, this *protégée* of Captain Mackness was a new type, a true Oriental, and Lady Gwen appreciated it accordingly. Mrs. Mackness had hung the purse round the neck of the Princess before taking her downstairs, and the next proof of restored confidence given by our Heroine was to open the purse, and undo the part in which the miniatures were enclosed, saying trustfully, "My Forebears!"

Our little Lady knew instinctively that she was in the presence of another lady, for she had never offered to show the pictures to Mrs. Mackness, who had only seen them accidentally; but with the *esprit de corps* natural amongst gentlewomen, she disclosed her family

affairs to this one. Lady Gwen looked in amazement at the pictures and at the purse, and noted every detail in order to acquaint Lady Glencartney, whose memory was unfailing, though she was over ninety years of age. The little purse was a bag of the delicate leather, formerly scented and made into gloves by the Italians, and with the leather was combined some very ancient embroidery. All this part had been slightly damaged with sea-water, and looked centuries old; but inside there were no such traces. And in an inner flap reposed the two portraits side by side, quite unhurt. The bag was hung round the neck by a chain of curiously twisted leather.

Lady Gwen said nothing; she returned the purse quietly, and thanked the Princess for allowing her to look at it. She was beginning to feel that this little Personage must be older than she looked, and might require treating with respect, and she did not care to provoke another sneeze of reprimand. So presently taking her leave of the Princess, who, on this occasion, made her a very courteous, undulating obeisance, Lady Gwen departed, driving straight to the abode

of Lady Glencartney, and pondering meanwhile on her adventures.

The accent in which our Princess had uttered her few words betrayed so much education. The very word "Forebears" was one that hailed from olden literature. What a mystery hung about her! Who and what was she? Lady Gwen was as pleased over this mystery as many women would be over a choice bit of scandal to which they alone held what might prove to be a clue, and produce a *dénouement*. We will not follow her through the whole of her conversation with Lady Glencartney, for it would take too long; it is enough to say that the latter, old as she was, was quite intelligent and intelligible, and without hesitation pronounced the purse to be, if not the same, yet an absolute facsimile of one that had been made as a present for herself years ago, but which she had never received. Of course, in the present state of affairs, nothing was told her of the way in which the purse had come to light. It was merely mentioned as having been brought from Japan by the crew of a trading vessel.



Lady Glencartney's story was curious. She said that it was her very own daughter and son-in-law, who had been, nearly thirty years ago, about to make a voyage round the world, and who had stopped in Rome for some time, and got their portraits taken by an Italian artist of note. The originals were sent to Scotland to adorn the portrait-gallery in the home of her son-in-law, the Earl of Strath Grampian, and these miniatures had been taken from them, and worked up into a purse, copied from a very old Italian model. The young Countess had wished her mother to have these portraits for her own pleasure, and set in this unconventional way.

The old lady, having told her story, thus far continued: "My dear Gwen, it isn't often that I have shown my child's letter to any one, but you shall see it now." And with her ebony stick, she made her way to an antique cabinet, in whose nests of drawers evidently reposed many treasures. Out of one bundle she took a certain letter, carefully preserved, dated and labelled "Her last;" and opening it, she read, knowing exactly where to turn for the words, "I am

having our miniatures put into the purse, dear Mother, for you, so that however empty it may be, you shall never feel poor. You can always say with Cornelia, 'These are my riches!' Barbara grows a great girl. She will be fifteen to-morrow, as no doubt you have already remembered. She makes good progress in her Italian, but admires nothing so much as the English poets, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Chaucer. She repeats long passages out of these by heart, learns these things so easily."

"Ah," sighed the old lady, "that's all past and gone. She and her husband and little Bab were all drowned, with every soul on board, somewhere off the coast of China or Japan.

Lady Gwendoline listened with speechless wonder and sympathy. What a clue was unravelling itself before her eyes! It was quite evident that, if the miniatures could be identified as being the same people represented by the family portraits of the Earl of Strath Grampian, there could be no doubt about this purse being the identical one referred to. But then it might, argued Lady Gwen, have been picked up

after the wreck, washed on shore ; it need not necessarily be connected with Captain Mackness' little waif, though it happened now to be in her possession.

Only against that view (she continued) was to be said that the little lady spoke of the portraits as those of her "Forebears," and that she had a knowledge of English, which could only have been imparted by an educated teacher. In those days Japan was too little inhabited by the English for such a knowledge to have been gained by other than daily and familiar intercourse.

These thoughts passed through Lady Gwen's mind, but she dared not express one of them ; so she took her departure, leaving Lady Glencartney in almost as great a state of bewilderment as she was herself.



## Chapter VIII.



AND now, to cut a long story short, I must inform the Reader that every investigation was at once made to clear up this wonderful mystery. Lawyers had enough to do with their pens, the women of London with their tongues; newspapers had leaders on the subject, and everybody was in a whirl and commotion except the Princess, who alone took it with her usual calm. She was the sought after of all seekers; the rage of London for a time, a real blessing during that season, as she gave every one so much to think about. Many people said she was "no doubt a hoax from one end to the other," by which one supposes they

meant, from the crown of her bald Head to the soles of her bare Feet. But as these two Ends were not at all far apart, they did not, after all, give scope for any very extensive system of fraud. Some people had the heart to say that "of course she knows originality pays nowadays ; she doesn't put on that sheepish look and inane smile for nothing." Others said, "What *can* you see in that big-headed, flat-footed creature to make such a fuss about? Why, she's no better nor worse than a Japanese doll!" And others, "I've no patience with dear Gwen, going so perfectly crazy about the old Jap—little old-fashioned creature. Not quite canny, I think." Some people summed her up, pityingly, as "Quaint," and said no more.

Nobody as yet knew her to be a Princess, you see. They only knew her as a possible connection of old Lady Glencartney, who had been "out of the world" (by which they meant the world of fashion) for many years, and as the only *possible* niece of the Earl of Strath Grampian, who had, on the death by drowning of his elder brother, succeeded to the Strath Grampian estates.

It was, therefore, "really not worth while to begin liking this oddity" just now, until her identity was proved.

But some people had not waited to like her until her identity was proved, and a pedigree of some sort made out for her. For instance, the Macknesses, and the policeman, alias "the Mikado," who often stepped in to ask how the poor juggling girls (for such he took them to be) were getting on in England. Also, one or two of the sailors who lived near the docks had come to ask after their "little leddy" from the skipper's wife, and had been rewarded by most lovely smiles and sweet reminiscences of the days on board ship, little allusions being made in classic English to their civilities, the visit ending with a kiss, blown to them indiscriminately by our heroine, in the most easy and indifferent way.

It need hardly be said that Her Serene Limpness had long since been removed from the care of good Mrs. Mackness, and placed in an abode more suited to her station. Lady Gwendoline took her into her own house, and by degrees drew from her many

details of her former life, all which information gradually strengthened the clue which eventually led Lady Gwen to the conclusion that she was no other than a granddaughter of the Mikado of Japan, and also a great granddaughter of old Lady Glencartney. During these conversations the Princess would, for some time together, talk quite coherently, and describe her mother so distinctly that Lady Gwen thought it worth while at once to write down all her little speeches. There were even small peculiarities of voice and manner noted, with the Princess's usual attention to detail, that reminded Lady Gwen of the great-grandmother. Then she described her grandfather, the Mikado, quite accurately; but, after a bit, her brain failed, and she would mix him up with the Policeman, calling them both "Mikado," wandering on to the toy-shop experience, and causing Lady Gwen rather to doubt her sanity. This episode of the toy-shop puzzled Lady Gwen; she could not understand what the Princess could mean by saying she and a friend had taken tea in the window of the big toy-shop, with dolls. So she left this alone as

an unexplained mystery. On these occasions Lady Gwen found it was of no use to force the poor weak Brain, when the information ceased to flow spontaneously. The Princess would press her hand to her brow, and remain for a time wrapped in profound, but un-availing thought, which only caused her a headache, and produced no result. At times Her Highness



described most graphically the Palace, the gardens, the flowers, the courtiers, their very robes and headgear; at other times, the battlements, and the rising and setting sun; but the setting sun was never alluded to without a sigh, and a weary look that the dear Face had never worn when first we knew the winsome Waif. Sometimes, when she was delighting Lady Gwen in the dusk hours with her



sweet melodies, she would wander on into one more touching than any, and then break off sadly, saying, "I can't play *that*; I never see the sun now." Then again, she just once spoke about the gold fish in the basin, but this thought wrung her little Soul, and, as the connection of ideas forced itself upon her, she wailed, "Where's your Mither?" Of course, this was all quite unintelligible to Lady Gwen, but she noted it down, hoping some day the clue might be found.

Lady Gwen used to look fondly and wonderingly upon the little Asiatic thus thrown upon her hands, and wonder what would become of her in a country so little suited to her individualities as England. How would she get on? What would be the end of it all? For some time Lady Gwen kept the Princess indoors, really not caring to take her anywhere, and not liking the attention she attracted. At last she thought she would try dressing her in European costume, hoping against hope that it would make her a little less conspicuous. When Her Highness heard this, she, or rather her Nose, was all attention; and she inquired eagerly after the nature of her new "duds," as she

called them. Not that there was in her any ordinary feminine vanity. When, on arriving at Lady Gwen's house, she, for the first time in her life, caught sight of herself in a long pier glass, her burst of ecstasy kept her perfectly silent. She sat on the ground before her own image, uncertain who and what it was. There was at first only a blank of wonder; then little questionings, followed by greater wonder and greater questionings, the image remaining stationary, the mind (opposite to it) opening very, very slowly. A mind more able than that we are now considering would have done its wondering first, and then actively applied itself to questioning, forcing itself to dispose of the problem; but as we know, Her Mind was feeble, and travelled slowly, in little jets and puffs of thought and inquiry, between these occurring longer pauses for rest and contemplation.

She only dimly grasped the thought that this was herself or another self; and gazed earnestly with the look of inquiry and half apology on her Face that a spirit might wear who, in a better world, meets an old Earth-friend; and though longing to advance, modestly

holds back, and waits to be recognised. As the face looked lovingly at her, she hoped that she was not intruding, and furtively smiled; and as the image did the same, she took it for a welcome, and smiled more boldly, putting forth a Hand. So did the image. And now at last convinced that it was all right, she heaved a sigh of rapture, and remained perfectly spell-bound before the glass for a full half hour.

It so happened that Lady Gwen's maid had chanced to look into the room at the beginning of this period, and once more at the end; and forming her own conclusions, she remarked to the housekeeper in a casual way, "I think Missie Jap (which was her style and title below stairs) is getting very vain. She sat a whole half hour looking at herself in the glass to-day."

"Lor!" returned the housekeeper, "some folks are proud of their deformities. Not much to admire about *her*, is there? Heathen Chineese, indeed!"

"Ah, you may well say so," said the maid; "see what trouble Her Ladyship and I have had to teach her to sew, and yet she seems no nearer. She don't



Seen for  
the first time.

Thoughts. "!! .? !!! ?? !!! ?? !!!"

How

ff

Spell-bound



understand the nature of a hem. That's at the bottom of it! She *will* fray out the edge of her clothes into a fringe, all irregular lengths. But I will say," she added, in a voice that implied a wish to clear the character of the Princess, "I will say that her fringes don't ravel out like most people's; they look *that weak*, but they hold together somehow."

"Humph! (a pause) . . . I can't say as I like her hair-dressing. Even the Chinese have twists down their backs. Women ought to have long hair. Her ways ain't Christian."

Not Christian? Rather a heavy charge, surely! But when anything so serious as 'not understanding the nature of a hem' lies at the bottom of a character, the rest naturally follows.

So much for human judgments!

On the occasion of this visit to the milliner, she felt a mere childlike delight in being dressed up, and thoroughly enjoyed the function of trying on bonnets, to which she was subjected. Not so Lady Gwen or the milliner, who both looked anxious and perplexed; the former because she could not buy, the latter because

she could not sell. There stood the Central Figure,



the principal in this affair, smiling serenely, Head thrown slightly back over the right Shoulder, coyly observing, "Ye'll make a daintie quean of me. Verily ye will!" The milliner meanwhile took up the biggest bonnets she could find in her shop,

though foreseeing, before trying them on, that they would hardly perch on the top of that sumptuous Head. She kept on politely saying, "Allow me, Madam!" as she poised bonnet after bonnet thereon, and attempted to tie the strings under the Chin. The effect, in each case, was too truly ludicrous, the self-conscious little

bonnet surmounting the utterly unconscious and luminous Countenance of "Madam."

Lady Gwen, seeing it never could be that ordinary trimmed hats and bonnets would do, eventually had a hat made very flat in the crown, and with an enormous brim that backed up the Face like a glory; and in this the Princess was at length arrayed, to her own simple delight and other people's relief.

When it was first set on her Head, she remarked impressively, surveying herself in the glass,

"On her Hed a Hat,  
As brode as is a Bokeler or a Targe."

This completed the effect of an ox-eye daisy or full-blown Sunflower; however, it made her sufficiently human to warrant Lady Gwen's taking her to church next Sunday, wearing "my silken sarke and my Allow-me-Madam." She never could be disabused of the idea that this was the name of her new headdress.

When the new hat was brought home Lady Gwen took the Princess to church. This going to church was indeed an experience for both ladies. Her habitual



limpness seemed to have deserted Her Highness, so intense was her interest in the Bible stories and other allusions, which formed in her Mind a link to the Mother from whom she had first learned them. Then came the sermon.

The clergyman was a man of intelligence and feeling, but too sensitive and too devoid of self-confidence ever to figure as a popular preacher; besides which, his audience had let him see once too often that he bored them, and now managed thoroughly to discompose him and to prevent his doing himself justice by keeping up a gentle flutter of handkerchiefs, snapping of salts bottles, pulling off of gloves, and peeps at watches, when the sermon exceeded ten minutes.

Not so the Princess. Her whole Soul was absorbed; and presently the good man found himself speaking not to the whole listless congregation, but to just one child in a front pew, a child with olive complexion, wonderful black eyes, and an immense sunflower hat. Who was this child? he wondered.

He did not mean to preach to it; but unconsciously he did so, and aimed straight at the one devoted

listener, whose frequent changes of expression betokened an interest in every detail.

Preaching to such an embodiment of sympathy, his best powers were roused, and many another hearer at whom he was not particularly aiming was surprised and touched by his eloquence.

When the service was over, and the congregation again dispersed into the sunlight outside the church, the usual criticism of the clergyman began; but the current remark now was, "What has happened to Mr. Aynoe? He must have had an inspiration; I never heard him preach so before."

Yes, truly, he had had an inspiration that no one suspected, least of all she from whom it proceeded. Some of the worshippers, released from church, chattered on indifferent subjects as they walked along; some criticised; a few were roused to serious thought; while one, just One, meekly glided homewards hand-in-hand with her friend, quite unaware that she had loosed one tongue, and influenced several lives, too much moved to speak, too happy for words to flow. This one was "poor dear Gwen's Chinese Baby."



## Chapter IX.



T was some time since Her Highness had arrived in London, and investigations had been proceeding steadily; but a matter of this kind does not bear hurrying. The identity of the miniatures had been ascertained, and Lady Gwen had, in her own mind, no doubt that the Princess's story was genuine, borne out, as it was, by the witness of Captain Mackness. But at last the mystery was solved in the most complete and satisfactory manner.

A report ran like wildfire round London, announcing the arrival in England of a Japanese Embassy. ("Have you heard the news, my dear? A perfect

host of Chinese junks coming up the Thames, as grave as judges!!"), the said Embassy being sent purposely by the Mikado of Japan, to demand the restitution from His Sister of England of the Person of His Granddaughter,

Her Serene Highness the Moon-faced  
Princess. Dulcet and Débonnaire,

forcibly abducted by an English ship not long since.

\* \* \* \* \*

To obtain this favour, the Mikado had sent his most trusty and well-beloved ambassador, Nemikaka the renowned, and in his train the minor Princes, Bhonaluli and Blobavulus, to intercede with the Empress of the Setting Sun on his behalf. Much more was added to the same effect; and as, of course, our Queen had no wish to detain the Princess in England, and was able to explain that she had come over, seated on cordage, entirely on her own responsibility, any fear of *relations serrées* between the two countries was instantly removed, and every

arrangement was made for the safe conduct to her own country of the Japanese gentlewoman.

The most sumptuous junk in the possession of the Legation had been fitted up expressly for her use, in order that she might return triumphantly to Japan. There was no fear that the national prestige of the Japanese Kingdom should be lessened, for everything was done in the grandest style, and the presents sent by the Mikado to the Queen, formed, in fact, the nucleus of the "Great Japanese Loan Exhibition," so sumptuous were they. We may remark, in passing, that from this time onwards, a more cordial intercourse existed between the two countries than had hitherto been thought possible. However, it is not our province to enter into the political relations of these great States; we must restrict ourselves to the private history of Her Serene Limpness. Gorgeous robes had been prepared for the Royal Lady's use, to replace the soiled Joseph's coat and sea-green band; once more she fed upon vegetable marrow, liquid honey, and oysters, supplemented by chocolate "fondants," and clotted Devonshire cream, articles of

diet which Lady Gwen would willingly have procured for her sooner had she known they would be acceptable to her guest. I may also add that a large porcelain jar of vaseline had been brought over for Her Highness's use, and that she left a great portion of this in England "for the use of my English friends," this invaluable compound not having been at all known in this country until introduced by the Princess.

Attended by her own retinue, Her Highness was taken to Windsor to be presented to the Queen, clad in a "sarque" of rich Japanese silk, over a petticoat embroidered with quaint designs of dragons and foliage, in dark dull blue, on a creamy ground, tied up at intervals with bunches of borage, Love-in-a-mist, and dull blue ribbons.

On this important occasion Her Serene Limpness comported herself with perfect grace and with most delicious *naïveté*; and, though we are bound discreetly to draw a veil over details, we may, perhaps, just disclose the fact that on retiring from the Royal Presence, Her Highness made a profound and graceful

reverence; then, casting towards the throne a soul-subduing glance, she lightly blew a kiss to the Queen. The Japanese nobles, Bhonaluli and Blobavulus, took this quite simply and gravely, feeling not the most distant temptation to smile, and courtesy enabled the members of the Royal Circle to follow their example.

\* \* \* \* \*

Once the Princess had been to Court, and that the hungry question, "Who *is* she?" had been satisfactorily answered, all London took to liking her. People began to find out that she was "such a dear, original creature, quite unlike anybody else;" "One always foresaw she must be somebody; only, just at first, one has to be so very careful." One woman even went so far as to say to Lady Gwendoline, "She isn't so very bald after all. Perhaps her hair will grow some time," to which Lady Gwen, who saw no reason for wishing to alter the Asiatic type of her little Friend, merely answered, "Perhaps it will," and condescended to no further parley. At any rate, every one was now anxious to be introduced to the Lioness; but the latter received these ovations with



*The winsome Waif.*





grave courtesy, but with none of her usual *bonhomie*. She now not only permitted, but welcomed Lady Gwendoline's fondling, and after their visitors had left, would draw her footstool to Lady Gwen's feet, and lavish upon her every little endearing attention that her nature dictated.

One can hardly explain why our Heroine made so marked a difference in her manner towards these fair-weather friends and her true ones, for she remained blissfully unconscious of the many opinions afloat concerning her ; towards all these she was perfectly indifferent. Strong in her native simplicity, and careless of the fact that her princely rank was now fully acknowledged, she wound her tendrils round those that her fine instinct told her were good and true ; and in return, her real friends clung to her, as we all cling to people we know to be consistent in character.

Do not wonder at this word as applied to the Princess ! I claim for her that she was always, steadily and uniformly, the same ; weak in head, and strong in heart, gifted with a peculiar wisdom and

discrimination of her own, though perfectly devoid of the knowledge that guides ordinary people through the world. With eyes open to nothing but goodness, and a memory weak for everything but kindness, do you call her, in the main, weak or strong? It is a question I do not pretend to answer. But at any rate, you will admit she was consistent.

Amongst all the introductions to which our Princess was subjected one stood out above all others; she was, now all mystery was cleared up, taken to see her Great-grandmother; and this scene was too sweet, touching, and tender to be described by mortal pen.

When told that she was to see her Great-grandmother, a look of radiant joy overspread her Face; she clasped her Hands, and exclaimed, "In the West?"

Lady Gwen caught and interpreted the look, and seeing that she fancied her Mother was referred to, dreaded undeceiving her, but would not risk a disappointment. "Your Great - grand - Mother," she repeated, very distinctly, separating one syllable from another.

"Oh yes," said the Princess; "I know she will be changed. She has gone to the West, to the Land of the Setting Sun. She must, of course, be great and grand, my Mother."

Lady Gwen said no more; she thought it best to leave it so, and trust to the Princess never being undeceived. So she warned Lady Glencartney of the dear Granddaughter's delusions, and begged her to keep the secret, and to give her, if possible, the great happiness of believing that she had found her Mother. The meeting therefore took place. The Princess's manner was a combination of the most absolute respect and affection, but never did she betray any distress at finding her Mother so aged, and so much changed. All this her faithful little Mind took on trust; she heard very much the same voice, though in a quavering key; she saw



the same eyes, and noticed many trifles in manner the same in this old lady as in her own Mother. And hearing that she had become so great and grand, she accepted, in all humility, the fact that she must be old, old age being a season of great honour in Japan. So the loving pair held sweet intercourse, and no one disturbed the happy heresy.

The Princess had now only one thing left to wish for, to see the setting sun once more in company with her Great-grandmother, and so it was planned for her, at the old lady's suggestion, that she should sail from Plymouth, and that the two should travel there together, under the protection of the Japanese Embassy. But, before they left London, Her Highness made a most original suggestion of her own, namely, that she should give a party before she went to all her friends,—“all the people who have been kind to me.”

When asked to specify, she said, mentioning them in chronological order, according to the period at which she had become acquainted with them, “Captain Mackness and the sailors, and the little

boy, and Mrs. Mackness, and the Mikado Wight, the Bobby, and Lady Gwen, and Mr. Lockhart, and the good clergyman; and the Princes Bhonaluli and Blobavulus, and my Great-grandmother, and the Queen."

"My dear!" exclaimed Lady Gwen, who hardly knew how to cope with such an extremely primitive view, and yet who understood it so well, "won't it be rather a mixed party?"

"Mixed?" answered the Princess, looking puzzled, but pausing respectfully before she answered, in order to try and see what Lady Gwen could possibly mean. "No, I don't think it would be mixed; they are all nice people; there is not one unkind one amongst them." (It will be observed that she omitted the names of all her fashionable friends, as also that of the toy-shop woman, who had thrust her into the street, but without saying a single word against them. What a terrible thing it would have been for you and me, Reader, had we lived in the circle of the Princess's acquaintances, to have been simply "left out" when she reckoned up her friends!)

In answer to Her Highness's last remark, Lady Gwen said nothing, but bowed in silence, and reflected that the quaint Princess would not be long amongst them to bless the world of London with her childlike estimates, and she gradually came round to think that the party might take place; "only," as she said to Lady Glencartney, "it must be given by you or by me, and we must make her understand that we can't ask the Queen."

This view was put before the Princess, who yielded, but never could see why. Her Eyes pleaded so pathetically on this occasion, that Lady Gwen was forced to turn away at last to avoid their influence; and when the Princess found it was hopeless, she only heaved a sigh, and said regretfully, "The Queen was *very* kind to me." It was decided that Lady Glencartney should celebrate her Great-granddaughter's departure by this possibly "mixed" party, at which Lady Gwen would help her to preside.

So, on a certain day, Lady Gwen and Mr. Lockhart, who was a first-rate man on such occasions, went to the old lady's house, where a splendid supper was provided in the servants' hall.

The Princess and her woman, as well as the Princes Bhonaluli and Blobavulus, and Mr. Aynoe the clergyman, were in full force, and thoroughly happy. Captain and Mrs. Mackness, with their boy, were of course in attendance, and as many of the ship's crew as could possibly be brought together; and, bringing up the rear, the friendly Policeman, off duty if ever he was in his life, for such a collection of peaceful, happy faces augured well for tranquillity. The Princess, who had insisted on wearing her Court dress for the sailors, lunched about softly from one to another, seeing after every one's wants, recalling little experiences of the voyage to the sailors, forgetting no one who had done her a good turn, or shown her a little attention in her need.

She reminded one young fellow how he had asked her to mount the mast; and with as regretful and apologetic a look as if their relative positions were in no way reversed since she had acted the outcast Cinderella on the cordage, she said, "I really *did* try, but couldn't. Verily I *did*. Pardi!" She then reminded him how he had put his coat for her to sit



upon, and been "so, so kind;" then passed on to another man, and thanked him for the offer of his hammock; and so on to each in turn, dropping gracious words and beaming looks wherever she moved. Meantime, the little boy, whose hand she held in her own, stuck to her like a dog, the corners of his mouth turned down, and winking back his tears, more than ever determined that, whether the sea were rough or smooth, he would be a sailor, that he might have a chance to go to Japan, and see her again.

They all ended by drinking the health of the Royal Waif, with three tremendous British cheers from the tars, she standing with her hand in her Great-grandmother's, and blowing them all a kiss in acknowledgment of the toast. After this, the men wished to drink the health of Lady Glencartney and many more, but it was considered too noisy and exciting for the old lady.

Lady Glencartney asked for silence, and, in the pause that ensued, said, with quiet dignity, "My Friends, I wish to thank you very much for your kindness to my dear Child in her distress;" to which

the Policeman responded, "Ah, my Lady, I'm sure *I*, for one, little guessed who she was when I saw her drinking tea in the window of the toy-shop." So it all came out, and the incident of the toy-shop was explained to the entire satisfaction of Lady Gwendoline.

Before parting, the Royal Maiden went round amongst the guests, distributing with sweet *naïveté* the bunches of borage and Love-in-a-mist off her dress, and the gold coins from her antique purse as keepsakes to her friends. As she offered the sprays of Love-in-a-mist, that old-fashioned dull blue flower, from whose calyx spreads a forest of green antler-shaped spikes, she said softly, "You loved me through a mist."

She evidently felt that their love had penetrated the mystery that once concealed her origin.

Need we say how carefully these tokens of her goodwill were cherished by the tars, who had loved their "Missie" from the first, or how rueful was the expression of their honest faces when her liquid Eyes were raised to theirs for the last time?

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N.B.—I feel sure it will be gratifying to those who

have become interested in Her Serene Limpness to know that, at her special request, conveyed in three words to Mr. Aynoe, that gentleman was induced to give up his West End living, and to accompany the Princess to Japan.

She merely said, "Come with me!" and he went.

If, in future years, we should read in the Missionary reports that "Japan has been altogether Christianised, owing to the introduction of a devoted missionary at Court, whose strong and simple influence is nobly seconded by the young Queen," we shall all know how it happened.

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The party over, nothing remained but for the Princess to take leave of her friends in London, and to start with Lady Glencartney for Plymouth. And to Plymouth these two and their suite, which included Lady Gwen and Mr. Lockhart, and all the Japanese Embassy, repaired. In order to secure greater privacy, rooms had been taken for Her Highness in an hotel some two or three miles out of the town, it being intended that a State carriage, with a proper complement of

postilions and outriders, should take her next day into Plymouth, to meet her own Junk, which, with the other Japanese vessels, lay in the harbour. The suite of the Princess lodged chiefly in the town.

For the last time the venerable woman and her Great-grandchild strolled about together, reaching, by an easy ascent, an eminence which commanded an extensive view of the coast, and of the neighbouring harbour of Plymouth.

It was a splendid evening in July; and there, as they stood, the sunset drew near, the tints increasing every moment in glory. The Princess, who had never seen such a sight in England, held her Grandmother's hand in both hers, and trembled with emotion.

The gorgeous colours gradually took possession of the sky; and at length the great ball of fire sunk below the horizon, a glittering track of light spreading across the sea, almost to their very feet. The Princess looked up into the old lady's face, nearly speechless with happiness. "In the West" (she at length murmured)! "In the Land of the Setting Sun! *At last* I have found my Mother!"



## Chapter X.

*Time*, 10 A.M.—On the day after the departure of the Japanese Embassy.

*Scene*.—Interior of first-class carriage on the Great Western Railway. Up-train express, between Plymouth and London.



R. LOCKHART. "Well, she is the dearest little idiot I ever have seen or shall see. It isn't given to everybody to play the fool gracefully. Only one in a generation can do it as she does, with such admirable suavity and *bonhomie*. I don't know when I have felt so squeamish as when the bright colours of her Junk, with all its flags and trappings, grew dim in the distance, and finally disappeared. When that little

sunny pink spot went out, like a fairy lamp, just where the blue haze of sea and sky meet, I felt as sorry as a child."

LADY GWENDOLINE (*with a deep sigh*). "Yes, I shall miss her dreadfully. But as to her being an idiot, there I differ from you, Henry. Idiots are always more or less suspicious and fidgety, helping themselves on by their own low cunning. Our Princess had nothing of that sort. I maintain that she was merely a Softie."

MR. LOCKHART. "And pray, what may a Softie be, my dear Gwen?"

LADY GWENDOLINE. "Well, I mean one of those people whose hearts are more powerful than their heads, and who, feeling they have not been given worldly wisdom, implicitly trust some one else who is able, and oh, so willing, to help them. Their strong point is that they always know a friend from a foe; and once they trust, they trust implicitly. Their strength is, in one sense, made perfect by their weakness. Some Heaven-sent instinct wafts these helpless ones into a safe tide-pool, and they cling to their

true friends with the strength of sea-anemones to a rock."

MR. LOCKHART. "Yes, I think I see what you mean. We shall not quickly look upon her like again."

LADY GWENDOLINE. "No, indeed, she flew in upon us like a little bird, and flew out again, beckoning us to follow. In some ways we can all imitate her, and so, to the utmost of my poor ability, I will. As she would have said herself, in her own dear little way, 'I'LL TRY.'"

*The End.*











